

To:	Cabinet Member for Community Services
From:	Darren Lanes, Head of Street Scene & Leisure
Director:	Robert Styles, Director of Street Scene, Leisure & Technical Services

BRIEFING NOTE: EXECUTIVE - NON-KEY DECISION

APPROVAL OF TADDINGTON VALLEY DRAFT MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR PUBLIC CONSULTATION.

Summary of Issue:

Development of a Management Plan for Taddington Valley in order to progress active woodland management at the site.

Recommendation:

It is recommended that the draft Woodland Management Plan, attached, be approved for public consultation prior to adoption by the Council and submission to the Forestry Commission.

1 Background

1.1 Taddington Valley is a Council owned public open space in the north of the borough bordering Medway Council district. The site is primarily established woodland with a network of paths throughout that link the adjoining residential areas. With 17 public entrances the site is well used for casual recreation and to linked local communities being boarder on all sides by residential properties.

2 Main Issues

2.1 Currently the Council undertakes relatively basic management and maintenance of the woodland to ensure it complies with the Council's Duty of Care and ensure a safe environment for users of the site. At the current time focus is not given to development and enhancement of the site.

2.2 It is now the aim to manage this woodland site to enhance its biodiversity and landscape value whilst maintaining public access and improving local appreciation of it. A key factor in the overall plan will be bringing previously managed coppiced trees and pollard trees back into rotation alongside managing mature and immature trees, hedges and grassland to achieve a

healthy and well-balanced woodland that is in keeping with its status as Ancient Woodland.

- 2.3 To achieve the above a site Management Plan has been drafted for initial public consultation. The plan is based on the approved Forestry Commission template.

3 Legal Advice

- 3.1 The matters set out in this briefing note are considered routine or uncontroversial. The trees in most of this woodland are protected by a group Tree Preservation Order. Due to the level of coppicing proposed it will be essential to seek a Felling Licence from the Forestry Commission (which overrides the Tree Preservation Order) and in order to obtain this an adopted Woodland Management Plan is required to be developed in liaison with the local community and submitted and then approved by the Commission.

4 Financial and Value for Money implications

- 4.1 The project is identified in the Council's Capital Plan and is being proposed for evaluation in 2024/25 though is currently unfunded.

5 Risk Assessment

- 5.1 The recommendation is proposing initial public consultation in order to seek the views of local residents and minimise the risk of inappropriate future management. Climate change resilience of plant and animal species will be improved.

6 Public Sector Equality Duty

- 6.1 No impact, enhancements for access are proposed within the plan if funding can be identified.

7 Consideration by Overview and Scrutiny

- 7.1 We do not consider that this matter needs to be considered by O&S/ SSC before a decision is made.

8 Communications

- 8.1 Following the decision the Council's Media team will be consulted in regard to the implementation of the public consultation.

9 Conclusion

- 9.1 To support the recommendation above.

10 Annexes

- 10.1 Draft Management Plan for initial Public Consultation.